

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

### Virginia Correctional Enterprises Mod 2)

#### Virginia's A.L. Philpott Manufacturing Extension Partnership

#### Lean Techniques Increase Production for Virginia Correctional Enterprise

**Client Profile:**

Founded in 1944, Virginia Correctional Enterprise (VCE) operates a sewing plant within the Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women in Troy, Virginia. Inmates operate sewing machinery and utilize other resources belonging to the Commonwealth's Department of Corrections in order to produce sewn items for use within the department. Originally designed for producing blankets, the facility mainly produces hundreds of pairs of denim jeans daily. The sewing plant operation employs 150 workers.

**Situation:**

During an eight-hour shift, the operation generally produced 300 pairs of jeans per day. The facility had a goal of making 450 pairs within a ten-hour shift without severely impacting workforce numbers. VCE contacted Virginia's A. L. Philpott Manufacturing Extension Partnership (VPMEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for assistance.

**Solution:**

VPMEP provided on-site education and training on Lean Principles, including Value Stream Mapping, to key personnel. VCE's Tailor Shop Manager, Pat Elkins, also participated in a public Lean 101 Workshop. VPMEP and the facility's process team co-developed a current state map of the jean operation in addition to creating a future state map of an improved process/layout. By mapping out the production process, opportunities were discovered that allowed co-location of processing steps thereby eliminating wasteful material handling. VPMEP also assisted with establishing point of use storage (POUS) to improve material control. VPMEP saw the need for a measuring system, and white boards were installed for ongoing communication of actual production results.

**Results:**

- \* Increased production by 20 percent (1500 pairs to 1800 pairs a week).
- \* Continued association with VPMEP on improving production process.

**Testimonial:**

"Working with VPMEP has been a very positive experience, and I've learned a lot. We've made small changes but plan on making more changes in the future. My future plans include rearranging the entire floor setup for even better production. These plans are based on the training we've received from VPMEP. We look forward to continual improvements as a result of our working relationship with VPMEP."

Pat Elkins, Tailor Shop Manager